GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA
DEPARTMENT ON DISABILITY SERVICES

Open Government Report 2014

To institutionalize a culture of transparent and open government, accountability, and to expand opportunities for resident participation and collaboration, this Report describes how the Department on Disability Services has and will continue to develop and enhance transparency, public participation, and collaboration. In accordance with Mayor's Order 2014-170, this report addresses the following topics:

1)   **Transparency**

Describe the steps your agency has taken or plans to take to be more transparent.
- *How and to what extent your agency shares information with the public, e.g. publication of information in the District register and on the agency website, press releases, and documents in the agency's FOIAXpress reading room.*
  The Department on Disability Services (DDS) publishes notices in the DC Register for all changes in the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA) State Plan, changes in the IDD HCBS Medicaid waiver and rules, and any other changes to the legislation and rules governing the agency. The agency also posts all change notices on the agency website.

  The agency also publishes on the DDS website all policies and procedures, detailed information for applying for services and instructions and contacts for filing a complaint in person, on the website or by phone. The agency also posts the RSA state plan.

  DDS publishes extensive information on the quality management data that is collected and analyzed regarding the services provided by the Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) service providers. Included on the website and available for public review are the results of the Provider Performance Report (PPR) cards, a system of regular review of the performance of the DDA service providers against established criteria. The agency also publishes the Provider Certification Review (PCR) results, lists of provider agencies that are currently under sanctions for performance problems, a list of providers that are on the agency Do-Not-Refer list and provides the number of Serious Reportable Incidents (SRI) for each provider.

- *How the agency meets its obligations pursuant to the District's Freedom of Information Act and Open Meetings Act.*
  DDS publishes notices in the DC Register of the meetings of the State Independent Living Council (SILC) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), as well as public notices of proposed rules and regulations. Upcoming meetings are also announced on the DDS website in the "calendar of events"

section (for example, http://dds.dc.gov/event/statewide-independent-living-council-bimonthly-meetings). DDS posts all necessary information for requesting information under the FOIA and posts all responses in the FOIAXpress reading room. DDS also sends information on upcoming meetings and public forums directly to our stakeholder though our stakeholder listserv.

- ***Steps your agency will take to increase public access to information.***
  DDS will continue to identify opportunities to make information available to our stakeholders through electronic media and postings as well as in-person meetings and events. DDS respects and maintains the confidentiality of the Personal Protected Information (PPI) for individuals served by DDS. DDS is restricted in our ability to share certain information that contains PPI but will work to insure that information that does not contain PPI is available.

  DDS has also hired a Public Information Officer to more actively provide information through traditional media and to better manage our existing communication portals.

- ***Steps your agency will take, including an implementation timeline, to webcast live and archive on the internet board or commission meetings. (This question only applies to agencies that are overseen or advised by a board or commission that is subject to the Open Meetings Act.)***
  At this point, DDS has no plans to implement a live webcast of the boards and commission meetings. DDS does not currently have the expertise available to implement a live webcast but in FY2015 DDS will investigate the options available to retain the technical expertise to launch such a program. DDS does have an archive of the written and recorded minutes of meetings and those minutes are available to the public.

- ***How your agency has taken or plans to take steps to make more of its data available to the public.***
  DDS is working closely with the Office of the City Administrator (OCA) and the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) to identify a significant number of datasets that OCA and OCTO expect to publish online later this year. If no dataset from DDS is selected to be included in this 2014 release, we will continue to work with OCA and OCTO to identify datasets appropriate to publish in 2015. In the future, requirements for open data reporting will be provided by the Chief Data Officer.

2) **Public Engagement and Participation**

Describe the steps your agency has taken or plans to take to enhance or expand opportunities for the public to participate in agency decision-making.

All new policies and procedures developed by RSA go through an extensive process of public vetting before the agency formally adopts the new policy. The State Rehabilitation Council's Policy Committee is charged with drafting policies and procedures, which are then reviewed with an opportunity for comment by the full State Rehabilitation Council. Finally, prior to approval by the agency Director, all policies and procedures are posted and a public hearing held in order to get any feedback from people the agency serves or other stakeholders in the community.

DDS also regularly holds community forums and hosts policy review groups to seek public feedback on changes in policy and procedures and changes to the IDD Medicaid waiver. The Developmental Disabilities Administration (DDA) convenes a policy stakeholder review group to vet proposed policies governing the DDA before final approval by the Director.

In the last year DDS has updated the agency website with a focus of making the website more user friendly for the community. The website established specific areas to post information targeted to the needs of the various segments of our community; for example the website includes a "provider portal" with information specific to service providers including information on provider performance and Medicaid. The website also contains a portal with information specific to families and people making a choice about service providers and this also includes information about provider performance and what services are available from certain providers. DDS regularly posts information gathered during our monitoring and assessments of the DDA service providers and shares the details with the community. DDS also posts notices of upcoming meetings and opportunities for engagement on the DDS website.

This year the agency also revamped the DDS Facebook page and DDS now has a more active presence and posting of information of interest to the disability community via Facebook.

- *How your agency provides online access to proposed rules and regulations and secures public input on them. Please list links to specific websites.*
  DDS publishes public notices of proposed rules and regulations in the DC Register, http://www.dcregs.dc.gov/Gateway/IssueList.aspx . For our Medicaid waiver amendments and transition plan, we also post notice on our website at: http://dds.dc.gov/node/880702 which provides links to all of the proposed Home and Community Based Services (HCBS) IDD Waiver amendments, the proposed transition plan, a summary of changes, the current HCBS Waiver, the public notice of proposed amendments and information on the public comments received to date. Visitors to the DDS website can also submit their comments on the proposals through a link on the DDS website DDSPublicComments@dc.gov which then is routed directly to the responsible staff person for action.

- ***How your agency shares information and resources to keep the public properly informed, e.g. community meetings, public hearings, FAQs, and ways the public can provide input such as Twitter, grade.dc.gov, email contacts.***
  DDS publishes notices in the DC Register of the meetings of the State Independent Living Council (SILC) and the State Rehabilitation Council (SRC), as well as public notices of proposed rules and regulations. Upcoming meetings of the SRC and SILC are also announced on our website in the calendar of events (for example, http://dds.dc.gov/event/statewide-independent-living-council-bimonthly-meetings). DDS posts all FOIA responses in the FOIAXpress reading room. We also send information on upcoming meetings and public forums through our stakeholder listserv. DDS also shares information through the DDS Facebook page and regularly sends out messages to DDS stakeholders via Twitter and through stakeholder list serves.

- ***How your agency identifies stakeholders and invites their participation.***
  DDS has engaged in a variety of strategies to identify stakeholders, including reaching out to leaders in the disability community to seek their assistance in inviting participation. DDS has a stakeholder list of more than 850 people identified as people with disabilities, their advocates, providers, and other interested parties to whom the agency regularly contacts to share information on upcoming public forums and other events. DDS staff members attend and present at community meetings and coalitions and are active participants with the DC Chamber of Commerce for employment related activities. DDS also leads a network of 148 service providers that expands the agency reach and network into all areas of the disability community.

- ***Steps your agency will take to improve public engagement and participation including any new feedback tools or mechanisms the agency is considering.***
  DDS has and will continue to improve our community engagement through our use of social media tools and actively encourage our stakeholders to participate in the conversations on Facebook and Twitter. In addition the agency will continue the current efforts to collect the opinions and responses of individuals visiting the DDS office and receiving DDS services. DDS has initiated several versions of a consumer survey but has yet to identify a strategy the effectively collects feedback from a broad range of consumers. DDS will continue to work to develop survey tools that can provide consistent and reliable feedback.

  DDS has also supported the activities of organizations that are aligned with the DDS mission and provide opportunities for people with disabilities to participate in leadership activities.

3) **Collaboration**

Describe the steps your agency has taken or plans to take to enhance or expand cooperation among departments, other governmental agencies, the public, and non-profit and private entities in fulfilling its obligations. Please include a description of:

- ▪ *How your agency currently collaborates with the above parties. Please list links to specific websites if appropriate.*

  DDS accomplishes the mission of the agency through collaborative efforts with a variety of entities. DDS works closely with the DC Public Schools (DCPS) as well as Public Charter Schools and non-public schools in regards to the transition of students with disabilities from school to work or continuing education. DDS also works very closely with the Department of Employment Services (DOES) on all issues related to employment and job development and has participated in joint Job Fairs and recruitment efforts for people with disabilities. DDS RSA also regularly provides staffing at four (4) of the D.C. One Stop locations and provides a DDS staff presence at other related public agency locations including the DC Office of Veterans Affairs, Court supervision and Offender Service Administration of the Office of Returning Citizens. DDS also collaborates with the other human services agencies including the Department of Behavioral Health (DBH) in providing seamless services to individuals with a dual diagnosis and with Child and Family Services Agency (CFSA) to ensure the transition of young people who age out of CFSA services into DDS services. DDS regularly collaborates with the Office of Disability Rights (ODR) regarding services in the community and is closely aligned with the Department of Healthcare Finance (DHCF) in the management of the HCBS Medicaid program for individuals with IDD.

  In addition, DDS delivers services through an extensive network of more than 148 not-for profit and for profit service providers that operate under Human Care Agreements to provide critical services including residential services, day service, therapeutic and clinic services, training and employment services. DDS convenes monthly (DDA) and quarterly (RSA) leadership meetings with its Provider networks to ensure regular opportunities for face to face information sharing and exchange. Additionally, members of the DDS executive team routinely attend the DDA Provider Coalition meetings on request to listen to concerns, share information and problem-solve common barriers to quality service.

  DDS also works closely with the federal Social Security Administration (SSA) in the delivery of services through the DDS Disability Determination Division (DDD). The DDD coordinates with the SSA for referrals, data exchange, contractors and determination of eligibility for people seeing SSA benefits for a disability as well as the review and continuation of benefits.

- ***Steps your agency will take to improve collaboration with the above parties including any new feedback tools or mechanisms the agency is considering, e.g. prizes, competitions, and other innovative methods.***
  DDS constantly strives to improve the working relationships between DDS and the various partner organizations. DDS participates in the training and development of DDA service providers as well as regularly participates in meetings with the provider agencies to learn about their challenges and identify ways to assist.

  In FY 2015 DDS is working to improve the communications and relationship between DDS and the SSA for more coordinated and timely reporting of financial information.